



## Chemical surface tuning electrocatalysis of redox-active nanoparticles

Zhu, Nan; Ulstrup, Jens; Chi, Qijin

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# Chemical Surface Tuning Electrocatalysis of Redox-active Nanoparticles in Two-dimensional Assembly



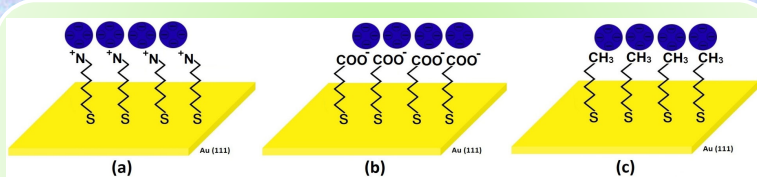
Nan Zhu, Jens Ulstrup, Qijin Chi \*



Department of Chemistry and NanoDTU, Technical University of Denmark,  
DK-2800 Kgs. Lyngby, Denmark. (\* E-mail: cq@kemi.dtu.dk)

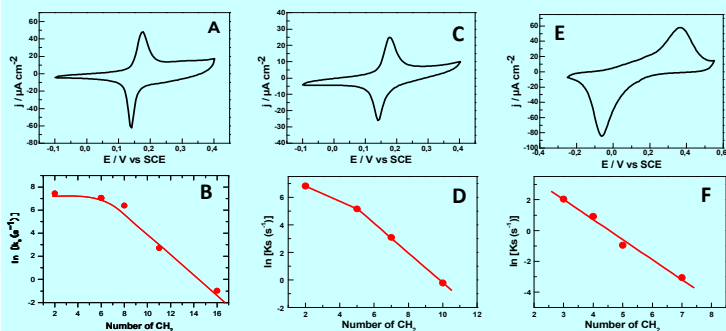
**Abstract** This work focuses on electron transfer (ET) and electrocatalysis of inorganic hybrid *Prussian blue* nanoparticles (PBNPs, 6 nm) immobilized on different chemical surfaces. Through surface self-assembly chemistry, we have enabled to tune chemical properties of the electrode surface. Stable immobilization of the PBNPs on Au(111) surfaces modified by self-assembled monolayers (SAMs) with various terminal groups including positively charged groups ( $-\text{NH}_3^+$ ), negatively charged groups ( $-\text{COO}^-$ ), and neutral and hydrophobic groups ( $-\text{CH}_3$ ) has been achieved. The surface microscopic structures of immobilized PBNPs are characterized by atomic force microscopy (AFM). Reversible electron transfer (ET) was detected by cyclic voltammetry (CV) of the PBNPs on all the surfaces. ET kinetics can be controlled by adjusting the chain length of the SAMs. The rate constants are found to depend exponentially on the ET distance, with a decay factor ( $\beta$ ) of ca. 0.9, 1.1, 1.3 per  $\text{CH}_2$ , respectively. This feature suggests a tunneling mechanism adopted by the nanoparticles, resembling that for metalloproteins in a similar assembly. High-efficient electrocatalysis towards the reduction of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  is observed, and possible catalytic mechanisms are discussed.

## Two-dimensional Surface Self-assembly

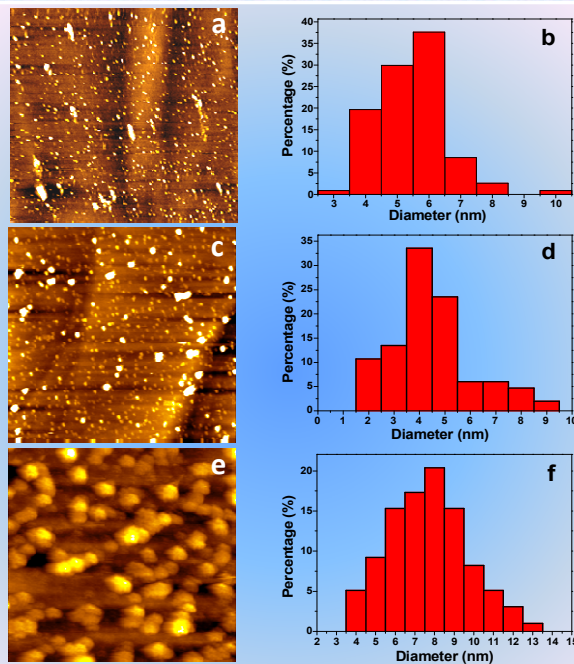


Schematic diagrams of assembling PBNPs on different chemical surfaces: (a)  $\text{NH}_2(\text{CH}_2)_n\text{S-Au(111)}$ ; (b)  $\text{HOOC}(\text{CH}_2)_n\text{S-Au(111)}$ ; and (c)  $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_n\text{S-Au(111)}$ .

## Controlling Electron Transfer Kinetics



## Surface Structure and Size of PBNPs



## Main Parameters for ET and Electrocatalysis

Table 1. Comparison of the redox potential and population of  $-\text{NH}_2(\text{CH}_2)_n-$ . Scan rate 0.5 V  $\text{s}^{-1}$ .

Systems	Formal redox potential $E^0$ (mV) vs. SCE	Rate constant $k_s$ ( $\text{s}^{-1}$ )	Normalized current density $10^{-4} j_{\text{cat}}$ (A/mol.M)
PBNPs- $\text{H}_2\text{N}(\text{CH}_2)_3\text{S-Au}$	149	1706	77
PBNPs- $\text{H}_2\text{N}(\text{CH}_2)_5\text{S-Au}$	154	1166	37
PBNPs- $\text{H}_2\text{N}(\text{CH}_2)_7\text{S-Au}$	152	599	25
PBNPs- $\text{H}_2\text{N}(\text{CH}_2)_9\text{S-Au}$	181	15	13
PBNPs- $\text{H}_2\text{N}(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{S-Au}$	177	0.4	0.9

Table 2. Comparison of the redox potential and population of  $-\text{COOH}(\text{CH}_2)_n-$ . Scan rate 0.5 V  $\text{s}^{-1}$ .

Systems	Formal redox potential $E^0$ (mV) vs. SCE	Rate constant $k_s$ ( $\text{s}^{-1}$ )	Normalized current density $10^{-4} j_{\text{cat}}$ (A/mol.M)
PBNPs- $\text{OOC}(\text{CH}_2)_3\text{S-Au}$	147	920	142
PBNPs- $\text{OOC}(\text{CH}_2)_5\text{S-Au}$	152	175	43
PBNPs- $\text{OOC}(\text{CH}_2)_7\text{S-Au}$	142	22	29
PBNPs- $\text{OOC}(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{S-Au}$	188	0.8	undetectable

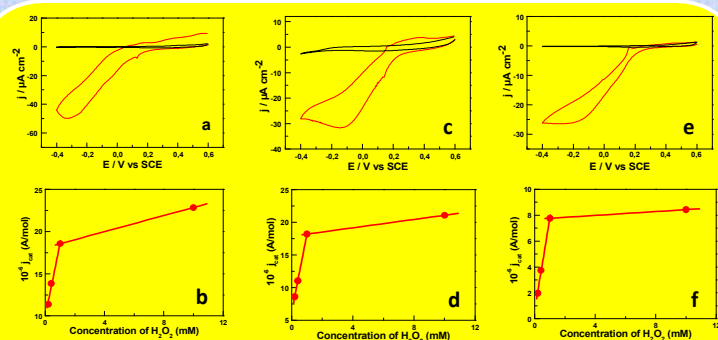
Table 3. Comparison of the redox potential and population of  $-\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_n-$ . Scan rate 0.05 V  $\text{s}^{-1}$ .

Systems	Formal redox potential $E^0$ (mV) vs. SCE	Rate constant $k_s$ ( $\text{s}^{-1}$ )	Normalized current density $10^{-4} j_{\text{cat}}$ (A/mol.M)
PBNPs- $\text{H}_3\text{C}(\text{CH}_2)_3\text{S-Au}$	140	7.7	48
PBNPs- $\text{H}_3\text{C}(\text{CH}_2)_5\text{S-Au}$	144	2.5	29
PBNPs- $\text{H}_3\text{C}(\text{CH}_2)_7\text{S-Au}$	137	0.4	24
PBNPs- $\text{H}_3\text{C}(\text{CH}_2)_9\text{S-Au}$	125	0.05	undetectable

## References

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## Chemical Surface Tuning Electrocatalysis



**Conclusion** We have demonstrated feasibility of tuning interfacial ET and electrocatalysis for redox-active nanoparticles by modification of the Au(111) electrode surfaces via surface self-assembly chemistry. The SAMs offer different surfaces with distinct chemical properties for immobilization of 6 nm inorganic hybrid PBNPs. PBNPs were stable on all the three types of surfaces, but display different ET and electrocatalytic efficiency. Surface interactions between the PBNP and SAM are mostly likely responsible for the present observations. The results appear to reflect the heterogeneous structures of the PBNP surfaces.